

Joint APPG-AIP Congress 2016

WARRICK COUCH

PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS (AIP)

2016 was a significant year for the AAPPS in that its triennial meeting – the Asia-Pacific Physics Conference – was for the very first time held jointly with the Australian Institute of Physics' (AIP) biennial Congress. The meeting took place in Brisbane, Australia, from 4-8 December 2016. The Honorary Chair for the meeting was the Nobel Laureate, Prof Brian Schmidt. Prof Halina Rubinsztein-Dunlop and myself were co-Chairs of the Organising Committee. The two of us worked closely with the President of the AAPPS, Prof Swan Kim, throughout the organization of the meeting.

Given the joint nature of the meeting, there was also an International Advisory Committee (IAC) chaired by Dr Robert Robinson, the previous President of the AIP and until December 2016 Australia's member of the AAPPS Council. The IAC comprised all members of the AAPPS Council, additional members from New Zealand, India and Saudi Arabia, and a number of female nominees from across the Asia-Pacific Region. This committee provided advice on plenary and invited speakers, helped raise sponsorship of the meeting across the Asia-Pacific region, and reviewed arrangements for supporting early-career researchers from developing Asia-Pacific countries to attend the meeting.

A total of 852 people attended the meeting, which included just over 600 from Australia and 220 from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The countries from the latter that had the biggest attendance were China, Japan, and South Korea. We were also very privileged to have the President of the Institute of Physics (IoP), Prof Roy Sambles, attend the joint congress.

The scientific program, which included sessions across



Fig. 1: The President of the AIP, Prof Warrick Couch (right), with the President of the IoP, Prof Roy Sambles.

pretty much all areas of physics, was of a very high quality, with an excellent set of plenary speakers: Alain Aspect, Richard Easter, Jean Jacquinet, Takaaki Kajita (winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics), Youngah Park, David Reitze, Michelle Simmons, and Qui-Kun Xue.

The formal presentation of some of the AAPPS's and AIP's most prestigious prizes and awards also took place at the meeting. These included the AAPPS's CN Yang Awards (Dr Marcus Doherty, Dr Takao Sasagawa, Dr Ling Lu), S. Chandrasekhar Prize of the Plasma Physics Division of AAPPS (2014: Prof Setsuo Ichimaru, 2015: Prof Predhiman Kaw, 2016: Prof Don Melrose), and the AIP's Bragg Gold Medal (Dr Phiala Shanahan), Ruby Payne-Scott Medal (Marcus Doherty), Education Medal (Dr Margaret Wegner), Harrie Massey Medal (Prof Ray Volkas), and Outstanding Service to Physics Award (Dr Cathy Foley).



Fig. 2: The President of the AAPPS, Prof Swan Kim, the President of the AIP, Prof Warrick Couch, and the President of the IoP, Prof Roy Sambles, with local indigenous performers at the join congress dinner.

At a time when it proved extremely difficult to attract sponsors and exhibitors, a very big vote of thanks should be extended to all the institutions and companies that did support the meeting, particularly the gold sponsors: UQ, QUT, Griffith University, ANSTO, and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems (EQuS). The AAPPS and Australian Optical Society (AOS) should also be thanked for their support.

There can be no doubt that the meeting was a huge success. It provided a stage not just for physicists from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region to interact and learn about each other's science, but also for new links and collaborations to be forged. It also demonstrated what vibrant and high quality physics communities we have within the Asia-Pacific region, that include many outstanding emerging young physicists.



Fig. 3: The winner of the AAPPS Division of Plasma Physics's S. Chandrasekhar Medal for 2016, Prof Don Melrose (second from left), receiving his medal and certificate from (left to right) the President of the AIP, Prof Warrick Couch, the Chair of the Division of Plasma Physics, Prof Mitsuru Kikuchi, and the President of the AAPPS, Prof Swan Kim.

